

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA
PARKS AND RECREATION
2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION

*To create enriching experiences
and beautiful environments
for everyone to enjoy.*

Parks and Recreation Department
HAMPTON, VIRGINIA



COVER: Kayaking at Grundland Creek Park

ABOVE: Junior Rangers at Crystal Lake, Sandy Bottom Nature Park
INSETS: Pee Wee Tennis, outdoor recreation, and after school programs

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A COMMITMENT TO HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE



Indoor and outdoor recreation, beautiful parks, and a host of leisure services are critical to a community's quality of life – and it is the intent of the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department to continue assuring the availability of these services in an innovative and efficient manner.

This Annual Report provides you with insights into how we have been accomplishing this in the past year. As you read these pages you will learn of the many programs that are available to youth, teens, families, seniors, the disabled community, sports enthusiasts, nature lovers ... and the list goes on.

Our Department strategy is centered on a variety of key goals:

The **design of our general recreational facilities** encourages the educational, emotional, cultural, physical and social development of our citizens.

The **availability of unique facilities**, such as what is found in many of our parks, addresses special desires that citizens may have. Hampton has the added luxury of a rich natural environment enabling water related facilities.

Maintenance and modernization assure that facilities are pleasing, safe, and clean; and that outdoor spaces are beautiful, inviting, and well-kept.

The **variety of programs** – both in terms of their content and locations – is comprehensive enough so that individuals and groups can enjoy activities on a year-round basis.

Open space for active recreation is essential. It is also important to preserve sensitive natural systems for more passive pursuits.

Partnerships with a variety of community and civic organizations are doing much to expand the recreational opportunities in Hampton. The city is grateful to its many partners and volunteers. This has included a wide host of non-profit organizations, community groups, churches, private athletic associations, recreation providers, businesses, educational institutions, the military, neighborhoods, and other city departments.

The focus is there. So is the commitment. On the pages of this Annual Report you'll find examples of how all of the Department goals are being addressed for the benefit of citizens. Thank you for joining us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Wilson'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jim Wilson
Director
Hampton Parks and Recreation Department



SANDY BOTTOM NATURE PARK

FROM BORROW PIT TO NATURAL TREASURE

Sandy Bottom Nature Park is a 456-acre facility that focuses on environmental education, recreation, and wildlife management. The city of Hampton's premier park has been continually recognized for its cleanliness, outstanding improvements, environmental education, and wildlife conservation efforts.

But there was a time when the park simply did not exist.

It was in 1952 that the mining of sand began in the area, creating borrow pits which the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) would use to construct Interstate 64. Decades later, in 1990, VDOT deeded 250 acres of their old mining pits to the city with the understanding that part of the land would be converted back to a wetlands area. Over the next few years, the city acquired almost 200 additional acres from private land owners, and began to design a wildlife refuge to be enjoyed by the public.

Sandy Bottom Nature Park was born.

Since its opening in 1996, the park has been exceeding its objectives. Visitation is over 500,000 per year. Recreation amenities include:

- Fishing in Sandy Bottom Lake which is home to a variety of game fish species. Visitors may fish from the pier or rent a boat.
- Twelve miles of nature trails where visitors can discover wetland marshes, wildflowers, hardwood forests or lake edge trails
- Eleven primitive camp sites (of which 2 are group sites), nestled in the shady wooded forest. There are also four tent cabins on the edge of Crystal Lake.
- Picnic shelters throughout the park
- Canoe, paddle, and jon boats for rent. Special guided canoe trips, led by park personnel, are occasionally offered throughout the year.
- A nature center that houses environmental and animal exhibits

- Tours, nature walks, and environmental education programs throughout the year
- A “bark park” under the trees, where residents can bring their dogs and allow them to run, off leash, and socialize with other dogs

The Junior Ranger Program offers new adventures for children each year. From fishing to rock wall climbing, the “Future Rangers of America” are sure to experience unique challenges.

New this year is the Sunday Cinema, where families gather to enjoy a nature movie. Another new program brings wildlife exhibits from the park to Bass

Pro Shops Outdoor World. This gives kids and parents an opportunity to talk with the rangers and experience the animals up close.

One of the park’s most popular programs continues to be the Hayride and Campfire which occurs monthly from fall through spring.

With all of these amenities, the respect for natural resources continues as an important backdrop.

The vast majority of people coming to Sandy Bottom Nature Park are mindful of this, recognizing the value of preserving, within an urban setting, what is obviously a precious resource.





BLUEBIRD GAP FARM

A UNIQUE RURAL EXPERIENCE

In a dusty yard, a chestnut-colored retired race horse reclines against the fence, content at grazing lazily in the warm sun...

Nearby, five ducks paddle steadily through the waters of a small stream. One of them sinks his head deep below the surface searching for food, his tail feathers pointing skyward...

There are children and their parents walking throughout the compound. Some of them notice that down the road, a pygmy goat is nibbling vigorously on long strands of hay...

Welcome to Bluebird Gap Farm in Hampton, Virginia.

Administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, the 60-acre farm offers a unique rural

setting in an urban environment. Its goal: To provide children a first-hand experience of life on a farm, allowing them to see animals that are native to Virginia.

The farm has more than 250 domestic and wild animals, including cows, guinea hens, barnyard fowl, a bobcat, a raccoon, birds of prey, whitetail deer, tortoises, alpacas, and peacocks. Close to 200,000 visitors enjoy the farm each year.

This is an opportunity to experience the rustic beauty of an antique display barn and the livestock barn which houses many of the farm's barnyard animals. There is also the natural beauty of the Master Gardeners Display Garden and Arboretum, flourishing in the splendor of the warm sunlight. Other attractions include a large

playground; Storytelling in the Park (see Page 12); the Children's Fall Festival with games, food, entertainment, and pony rides; and a Gardeners Annual Plant Sale in the spring.

In addition, those who desire a country-like experience on the second Saturday of every month can join in on a good old-fashioned hayride aboard a tractor-drawn hay wagon.

Farm life in an urban setting is not common in most cities – but the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to making this unique experience available to families, Wednesday through Sunday.

As the park's promotional materials emphasize: "The farm is waiting. We'll see you there!"

BUCKROE BEACH PARK

RECREATION FOR ALL AGES

Buckroe Beach is a place where people come to have fun – and they’ve been doing that for a long time.

Grandparents’ old black-and-white photographs of the beach show bathers standing in knee-deep water, posing stiffly for the camera while enjoying each others’ company.

Today the shoreline activities may be different – a spirited game of volleyball in the warm sand, or a tandem kayak excursion out over the waves – but the general feeling remains the same: Resting on the shores of Chesapeake Bay in Hampton, Virginia, Buckroe Beach is a precious recreational gem.

The city’s Parks and Recreation Department assures that this reputation is maintained. Employees assist with special events such as movies and dancing at the beach during the summer, and make certain that the three-quarter-mile beach and surrounding areas are clean and safe for the 225,000 annual visitors.

They also provide instruction for a variety of beach activities, including water safety awareness and the junior lifeguard camp.

The park provides picnic shelters, a children’s playground, and a large stage pavilion for community events. Kayaks, paddle boats, and umbrella rentals are available during the summer season.

In 2008 the Buckroe Beach Park hosted its 1st Annual 3D Sand Soccer Shootout where soccer enthusiasts at all ages and skill levels competed in round robin competition.

The beach’s observation pier was re-opened last summer, allowing citizens to bask in the sun while taking in the beauty of the bay.

Meanwhile, the new fishing pier replacing the one that was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel, will open in the spring of 2009. Like its predecessor, the new pier extends 709 feet into the Chesapeake Bay. This pier is stronger than the previous one. Parks and Recreation, working with Engineering and the Planning Department, has provided input to the design of the new facility. Parks and Recreation will also operate the pier.

Even the very young can enjoy the uniqueness of Buckroe Beach Park. At a “Tiny Tot Touch Tank” parents are invited to bring their toddlers to the beach and let them have a close look at creatures that live in the bay. As one wildlife specialist notes, “It’s amazing to notice these youngsters’ reaction to a simple thing like a sand crab – until you realize that they had never seen one before!”

That’s the beauty of the beach. There’s something there for everyone.





HAMPTON'S PARKS MEET A VARIETY OF NEEDS

The parks that are found in an urban setting are often the most visible feature to citizens looking for recreation and leisure. Here is an overview of Hampton's parks.

WATERFRONT AND FEATURE PARKS

- **Air Power Park**, through self-guided tours, displays Hampton's role in America's early space exploration and aircraft testing.
- **Blue Bird Gap Farm** has more than 250 domestic and wild animals.
- **Buckroe Beach Park** provides a clean beach and pavilion.
- **Carousel Park** invites visitors to enjoy a wooden carousel from the 1920's.
- **Gosnold's Hope Park**, with 105 acres, offers picnic facilities, a public boat ramp, a fitness trail, athletic fields, a playground, picnic shelters and trailer sites.
- **Grandview Beach Nature Preserve** includes more than 475 acres of salt marsh, a tidal creek, and a Chesapeake Bay beachfront.

It's a getaway site accessible by foot only, for swimmers, beach combers, bird watchers, and others interested in discovering natural wetlands mysteries.

- **Grundland Creek Park** is an ideal location for outdoor recreation. Programs include moonlight paddles, ecotours, an Outdoor Adventure Camp, and team building activities.
- **Mill Point Park** is a Downtown 2-acre park with a 300-seat amphitheater and a picturesque view of the Hampton River. It's ideal for weddings.
- **Ridgway Park** is a favorite place to enjoy the ducks. It is also home to the city's newest "bark park."
- **Sandy Bottom Nature Park** lets visitors enjoy environmental education and wildlife management.

SPORTS AND FITNESS PARKS

- **Boo Williams Sportsplex** is a privately owned facility that provides basketball, volleyball, indoor hockey, and indoor track and field opportunities.
- **Briarfield Park** includes four lighted softball fields, five lighted tennis courts, four large picnic shelters, a fitness trail, and a large playground.
- **Darling Stadium** hosts football, soccer, track, and special events for the Hampton Schools.
- **Hampton Soccer Fields** support the City's soccer program and are used by local recreational leagues.
- **Woodland Skateboard Park** is enjoyed by bikers, skateboarders, and in-line skaters.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Often located near Hampton elementary schools each of these parks hosts its own variety of amenities such as picnic areas, playing fields, playgrounds, trails, etc.

- **Aberdeen Neighborhood Park**
- **Armstrong Neighborhood Park**
- **Booker Neighborhood Park**
- **Burbank Neighborhood Park**
- **Cary Neighborhood Park**
- **Eason Park**
- **Jane Bryan Neighborhood Park**
- **Machen Neighborhood Park**
- **Matteson Trail**
- **Tucker Capps Neighborhood Park**
- **Y.H. Thomas Neighborhood Park**

In FY07 the city processed 100 applications for special events in public parks.



PARKS DIVISION OPERATIONS

ALWAYS ON THE READY

**Special event support. Landscape operations.
Facilities design, construction, and repair.
Beach maintenance.**

These are among the many responsibilities performed by the individuals who do much of the “behind the scenes” operations work to assure the city’s parks and recreation facilities are safe, attractive, and in working order for the public to enjoy.

Whether it’s setting up stages and bleachers for a major festival, or working with other departments in the design of the new Buckroe Pier, the Parks Division Operations Team is continually on call with a watchful eye.

Other specific duties include:

- The monthly inspection and repair of playgrounds throughout the city, including all school playgrounds, to ensure a safe play zone
- The maintenance of flower beds, shrubs, trees, and lawns for close to 30 schools, 22 parks, 4 community centers, the Downtown area, and most roadways and medians throughout the city. The city received the Coliseum Business Improvement District’s 2007 Metamorphosis Award for the Most Improved Property in the Coliseum Central area, for its implementation and ongoing care of its Coliseum Drive streetscape.
- The oversight of irrigation systems and pond aerators throughout the city
- The continued maintenance of Buckroe Beach
- Special event security and assistance, which includes parking direction for visitors, posting of signs and barricades, and assuring a safe, clean environment
- The organization of little leagues, pee wee leagues, and adult sports leagues
- Maintenance of citywide athletic fields and school fields, including Darling Stadium
- Assistance during emergencies including damage repair, road clearing, and evacuation assistance
- Installation of city-sponsored decorative elements such as flags, banners, etc.

From the public’s perspective they may not always be center stage – but the Parks Division personnel who oversee operations play a critical role in the public’s enjoyment and safe use of city facilities.

A COMMITMENT TO OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

The list of benefits associated with wildlife management is extensive.

Anyone who has experienced a tree full of warblers knows that songbirds add color, movement, and sounds to a landscape. Children delight in the early evening sounds of calling frogs in a nearby pond. Wetlands, which provide food and living space for wildlife and aquatic species, can also lessen flood damage by storing and then slowly releasing waters into a surrounding area.



The city of Hampton prides itself on being home to an abundance of wildlife and natural beauty. That's no easy task considering the available land space challenges that are often found in an urban setting. The city's Parks and Recreation Department is committed to maintaining or restoring the area's plant and animal diversity, with a particular emphasis on endangered species.

Through a program of monitoring, management, and public collaboration, the city's Wildlife Management Plan, created in partnership with several state and federal agencies, is seeing significant success. Three components of the plan have had the strongest impact.

WILDLIFE REFUGES

Hampton's premier park, Sandy Bottom Nature Park, is a 456-acre environmental education and wildlife management facility.

Much of the park's area is composed of wetlands. The area is designed to enhance and protect wildlife habitats and to provide visitors with a chance to learn about its unique environment. Over 400 species of plants, and a variety of wildlife, make the park their home. A number of wild animals that would not be able to survive in the wild for one reason or another reside permanently at a wildlife center in the park. For the safety of the animals, this compound is not open to the general public. However, general park tours are periodically scheduled to include this area. Check with the park for dates and times.

In the city's eastern sector, Grandview Nature Preserve covers over 475 acres of salt marsh, tidal creeks, and Chesapeake Bay beachfront. The Preserve is a great location to beach comb, observe the migratory birds, and discover the wonders of wetlands. As with Sandy Bottom, a resource management plan for

the area deals specifically with the threatened and endangered species at Grandview Beach.

Since many of the city's open spaces are city parks, the city also plans to adopt management plans in the future for each park site.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

The Code of Virginia provides localities with the ability to identify lands to be set aside for open space. The basic guiding document in this process is the city's Comprehensive Plan. Through zoning ordinances, the city also has considerable say over the development of private lands.

Habitat management is where the urban planner, landscape architect, developer, and builder play a key role. It is their efforts that can create mitigation scenarios that are sensitive to the needs of both humans and wildlife. This can often be accomplished through the management of vegetation, since this affects the diversity and composition of wildlife populations.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The city also manages a focused outreach effort to help assure that people are sensitive to the delicate relationships between humans and wildlife.

Scout groups, schools, service organizations, and the general public have numerous opportunities to learn about the delicate relationship between humans and wildlife. The city offers seminars, field trips, special events,

and tours in park settings for thousands of visitors each year.

There are also opportunities for interested parties to find information on their own. For instance, what should a resident do if they spot a raccoon or deer in their backyard? By looking at the wildlife Management Plan at the Parks and Recreation web site (www.hampton.gov/parks) they will see recommended interactions (tolerance, avoidance, etc.) for a variety of mammal species.

At a gathering of youngsters at Sandy Bottom recently, a park ranger talked about the benefits that snakes bring to our habitat.

"Years ago, people felt that the only good snake was a dead snake," he said. "But that's all changed. Today, we recognize that these animals play an important role in keeping down the population of rodents and other pests."

One young boy knelt down for a closer look at the three-foot snake that was sleeping in a sun patch in its glass cage. His friends also studied the animal, satisfied with a newfound understanding about a creature they had given little thought to in the past.

Through habitat management, the creation of wildlife refuges, public education, and other programs, Hampton is continuing with its commitment to the preservation of natural resources.



Sandy Bottom Nature Park



ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

HERE'S A CHANCE TO GET OUT AND PLAY

In the winter 2008 Hampton Youth Basketball League, 1,076 young people gathered with their friends on the city's courts and shot, dribbled, and jumped while playing on 96 teams for a total of 512 games.

Other youth and adult sports programs also saw vigorous participation throughout the year.

This kind of involvement is indicative of Hampton's Parks and Recreation Athletics programs – both in terms of the number of residents who participate in sports activities, and the

administrative efforts that make the programs available.

In Hampton, programs include youth basketball, youth football, youth girls' softball, adult softball, and adult beach volleyball. The city helps organize the leagues, collect registration fees, hire umpires and referees, certify volunteer coaches, and provide the venues for the sports activities.

For leagues that are administered by neighborhood sports associations (such as youth soccer and youth

baseball) the city assures that fields are well-maintained, available, and ready for play.

The involvement in sports activities continues to rise, as witnessed by the growing number of people coming to Gosnold's Hope Park on Saturdays to watch the enthusiasm of youngsters playing football.

For the coming year, plans are also in place to use the Boo Williams Sportsplex as the venue for youth basketball leagues on Mondays through Thursdays. Previously, local

middle school basketball courts had been used for that function.

Whether it is the challenge of competition, the joy of being with friends or the excitement of learning new physical skills, participation in sports is an important part of many people's lives.

The Hampton Parks and Recreation Department is committed to assuring that as many residents as possible have the opportunity to participate in a variety of athletic programs.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Continued interaction with our environment is an important part of the human experience.

That's why the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department provides a variety of programs to give disabled youth and adults the opportunity to participate in recreation and leisure programs.

For children being signed up for therapeutic recreation, professional staff completes an assessment to assure they are placed in a program that meets their needs.

"FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS"

Youth with special needs can attend summer camps and experience arts, crafts, swimming, and field trips. At these camps, volunteer "Friends Helping Friends" are trained in ways to improve the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the campers. Common experiences, like completing a jigsaw puzzle or drawing a picture of your family, become an opportunity for joy and accomplishment.

In addition, an after-school program at select facilities gives youth with disabilities the opportunity to interact in social settings. For instance, as the Phoebus High School football team conducts its practices, disabled youth contribute by bringing players the necessary equipment and assuring everyone has the water they need. The players can express their sincere thanks – and for the special needs youth, there is an important sense of being part of something they otherwise would not have experienced.

SOCIAL EXCURSIONS

There are also social excursions designed to introduce these youth to experiences that many of us take for granted – such as finding common items in a grocery store and, with the help of a trained aid, accomplishing the task of counting out the money to pay for the items and receiving your change.

Parties, such as an ice cream social at Buckroe Beach, provide a chance to "hang out" with friends and enjoy some tasty fun in the sun.

EVENTS AND SPORTS INSTRUCTION

For adults with special needs there are ongoing opportunities as well. These individuals can participate in events with others while playing cards and board games, dancing, doing crafts, and much more.

Through a partnership with the Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department, the City of Hampton participates in the Blaze Sports Clubs. This includes instruction for youth, teens, and adults with physical disabilities in a variety of adaptive sports such as wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis, swimming, and track and field.

Inclusiveness. It is an important component of the Therapeutic Recreation Services program in Hampton.

It will continue to be in the future.



DANCING ON A SUNDAY NIGHT

"Everybody on board? Here for a good time?"

The lead singer from a popular local band raises his hands as the audience responds with shouts and applause – yes, everyone's ready for some music!

Groovin' By The Bay (formerly Big Bands At Buckroe), occurs every Sunday night in Hampton during the summer, free of charge. It's administered by the Parks and Recreation Department and takes place adjacent to the Buckroe Beach boardwalk. From week to week, the music from popular local bands can cover a wide range of styles. It might be oldies one night. Beach music on another. And then Motown, or swing, or pop.

For the thousands each summer who enjoy bringing out their lawn chairs and picnic baskets, it's a great way to wrap up the weekend. Many simply like listening to the music on a clear summer night. There are also plenty of others who enjoy cutting a mean two-step in front of the newly renovated band pavilion.

"Can't help it," smiles one dad as he shuffles along the dance floor with his six-year-old daughter. "She's the hip-hopper of the family. She says if the music is there, you just need to enjoy it!"



MAGIC, MUSIC, PUPPETRY AND PROSE

It is Wynne Ford "Storytelling in the Park" at Bluebird Gap Farm, and magician Rob Westcott, dressed in ranger's garb, peers out to his audience.

With a flourish, he holds up a simple glass of milk and begins pouring it into a polished silver cauldron. He affixes the lid and says "Okay, kids. Give me the magic word!" and a chorus of "Abra-ca-dabra!" comes from the audience.

Two taps from the magic wand, and Westcott removes the lid – and there sits a small white rabbit, her whiskers twitching in the noon-day sun.

"The milk is gone but the bunny is here," he says. "Her name is Princess! You'll each get a chance to pet her after the show."

Throughout the early summer a number of other entertainers also appear at this weekly outdoor event. One storyteller shares tales about far away places and distant times with feisty princesses and befuddled bullies. Another interacts with colorful dinosaur puppets.

For the youngsters and their parents, it is definitely a change of pace. Getting away from television and computers, hundreds come too Bluebird Gap Farm each week, welcoming the opportunity to enjoy one of the oldest forms of entertainment known to mankind – it's called storytelling!

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

"Don't miss this unique opportunity to expose your children to the world around them!"

That was the 2008 proclamation for Hampton's International Children's Festival at Downtown's Mill Point Park, celebrating its eighth successful year. Hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department, the festival provided a unique opportunity for over 12,000 visitors to experience the sights, sounds, and exotic cuisine of distant countries from around the globe.

The event each year targets children of middle school age and younger – but there are plenty of parents on hand as well.

This year, the festival included 28 international booths; strolling entertainers in full regalia; enticing foods representing countries from Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean; two stages where performers shared their international dance and music heritage; and a new storytelling area.

As one young girl noted after watching the colorful international parade wending through the park, "I didn't realize the world was such a big place!"



"THE PARADE IS HERE!"

While crowds line the street sipping hot chocolate or clapping their hands on a brisk December evening, it is a time for celebration!

Families delight at the sight of an eight-foot-tall rocking horse with a gift tag signed by Santa.

A space shuttle replica passes through the street on wheels, illuminated by "5,000 sparkle lights!"

There is Cinderella's Magical Carriage, white and resplendent, with a regal coachman and small children dressed as mice.

This is the Hampton Holly Days Parade — a traditional Christmastime fixture in Downtown Hampton that draws large gatherings each year! The event is organized and produced through the Parks and Recreation Department while also being shown on The City Channel, and WVEC-TV (ABC) in the Southeastern Virginia/North Carolina market.

The parade typically includes over 100 entrants – everything from high school and college bands, classic car clubs, area businesses, youth organizations, and, of course, the Police, Fire, and Sheriff's Departments with lights flashing and sirens blaring.

In recent years, the city has hosted a workshop featuring a local expert on the art of making creative, attractive, and affordable floats for all to enjoy.

Is the parade popular? People have said they traditionally attend it, year after year. In the last three years, the network telecast of the parade has ranked first in its televised timeslot, far outpacing the competition.



The Hamptons ...

TWO UNIQUE GOLF EXPERIENCES

With close to 95,000 rounds played between them in 2007, the Woodlands and the Hamptons golf courses continue to stand among the most popular golf courses in the Hampton Roads region.

The Woodlands, a Downtown Hampton landmark, has been providing a haven for golfers for over a hundred years. The par 69, 18-hole layout provides a challenge for any skill level, but golfers shouldn't let the short yardage fool them.

Three ponds and the Hampton River bring water into play on many of the Woodlands holes. There are large trees that provide shade and beauty while offering their own unique challenges. When golfers are tempted to go for the green, they often consider the strategically placed bunkers that are found throughout the course.

The Greater Hampton Amateur Championship, one of the largest and most popular tournaments in Hampton Roads, is played at the Woodlands every July.

Meanwhile, the Hamptons boasts three distinctive nines, each with its own unique qualities.

"The Woods" takes golfers out through tree-lined fairways punctuated by well-bunkered greens.

"The Lakes" is perhaps the most scenic of the three nines, and the most challenging. Those beautiful lakes come into play on 5 of the 9 holes.

"The Links" nine has Scottish-style mounting pot bunkers and windswept ornamental grasses.

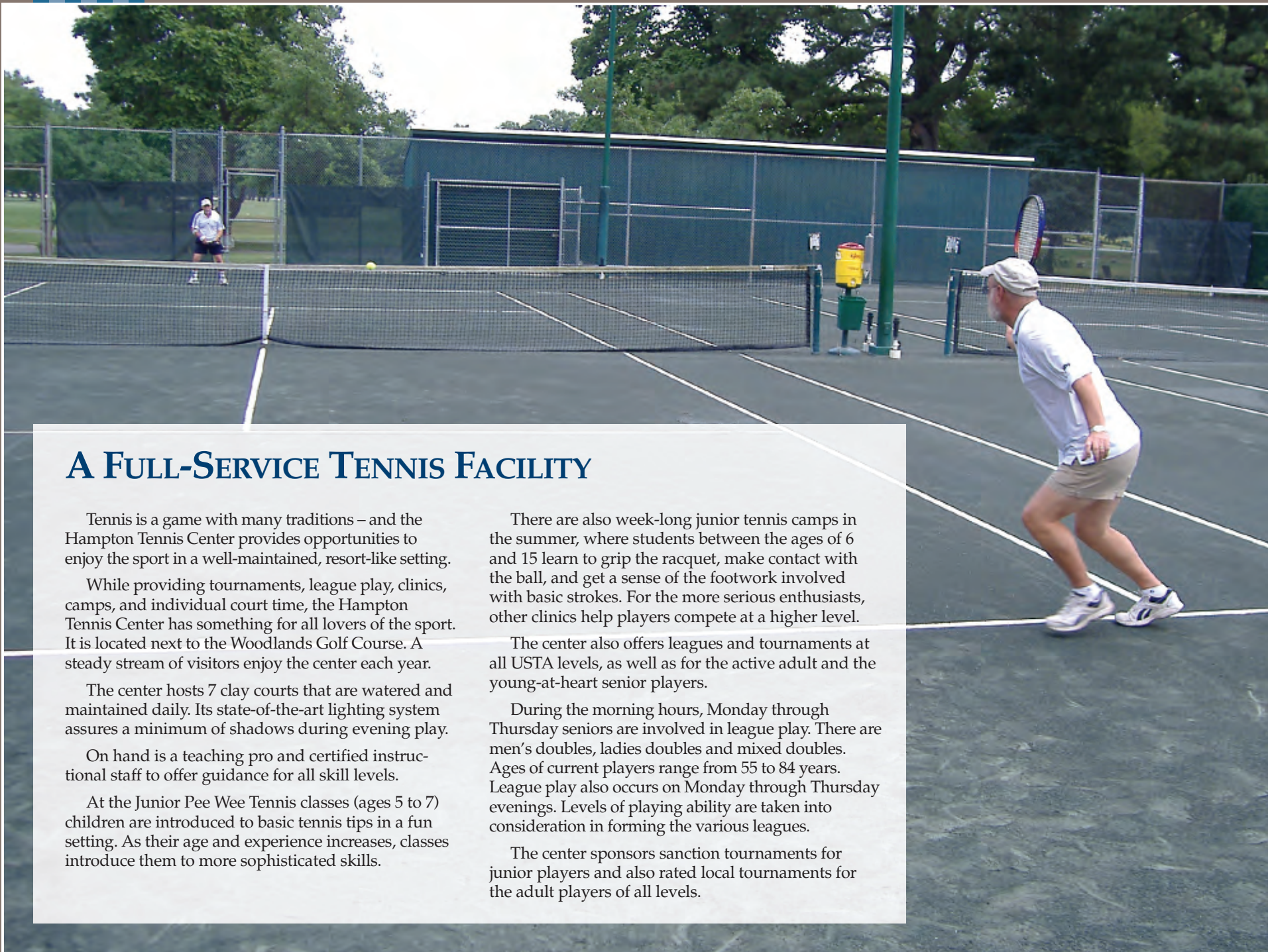
The Hamptons in 2008 has also hosted two golf summer camps including "Hook A Kid On Golf" for youngsters with no prior golf experience.

The Woodlands has a newly upgraded clubhouse. This year, the course's tee boxes are also being renovated. At the Hampton's, significant landscape upgrades are underway.

The Woodlands and the Hamptons are recognized as two distinctly different golf courses – and each offers a unique high-quality experience.



... and the Woodlands



A FULL-SERVICE TENNIS FACILITY

Tennis is a game with many traditions – and the Hampton Tennis Center provides opportunities to enjoy the sport in a well-maintained, resort-like setting.

While providing tournaments, league play, clinics, camps, and individual court time, the Hampton Tennis Center has something for all lovers of the sport. It is located next to the Woodlands Golf Course. A steady stream of visitors enjoy the center each year.

The center hosts 7 clay courts that are watered and maintained daily. Its state-of-the-art lighting system assures a minimum of shadows during evening play.

On hand is a teaching pro and certified instructional staff to offer guidance for all skill levels.

At the Junior Pee Wee Tennis classes (ages 5 to 7) children are introduced to basic tennis tips in a fun setting. As their age and experience increases, classes introduce them to more sophisticated skills.

There are also week-long junior tennis camps in the summer, where students between the ages of 6 and 15 learn to grip the racquet, make contact with the ball, and get a sense of the footwork involved with basic strokes. For the more serious enthusiasts, other clinics help players compete at a higher level.

The center also offers leagues and tournaments at all USTA levels, as well as for the active adult and the young-at-heart senior players.

During the morning hours, Monday through Thursday seniors are involved in league play. There are men's doubles, ladies doubles and mixed doubles. Ages of current players range from 55 to 84 years. League play also occurs on Monday through Thursday evenings. Levels of playing ability are taken into consideration in forming the various leagues.

The center sponsors sanctioned tournaments for junior players and also rated local tournaments for the adult players of all levels.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Imagine this: The sun has set. The solitude of a park environment surrounds you. It is wonderfully quiet. As you gaze upwards, the stars seem to shimmer more brightly than you've ever realized – and the moon looks fantastic! One of your hiking companions, a local amateur astronomer, invites you to look through his telescope so that you can see ... the rings of Saturn!

"A Night of Stargazing" is just one of many outdoor activities made available through the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department. Recognizing that outdoor recreation is important to so many people, the department provides a wide array of activities.

Examples include:

- A moderate bike ride through First Landing State Park where participants can observe the unique forest and cypress swamps
- Surfing instruction at Virginia Beach, for surfers at all levels
- A sailing camp for youngsters, including information on how to paddle and seine
- An adventure on the 50-foot-tall Alpine Tower Ropes Course, for people at all ability levels. This could include goal-oriented trainings, team-building initiatives, or just recreational play days.
- A nature walk through the Grandview Nature Preserve to observe birds and wildlife with the help of a park naturalist
- Portable rock wall climbing, which youngsters enjoy (photo, right)
- The Outdoor Recreation programs also provide nature interpretive canoe and kayaking trips on a variety of Hampton's waterways including Long Creek, Newmarket Creek, Back River, and the Hampton River.

Thousands of people take advantage of the city's Outdoor Recreation programs each year.



COMMUNITY CENTERS PROVIDE A RANGE OF SERVICES

Whether it's treating yourself to a workout with free standing weights, engaging in a pick-up basketball game, or introducing your five-year-old to the joys of tap dancing – Hampton's various Community Centers can offer these types of services and much more.

In the last year, the Community Centers hosted thousands of visits to their facilities, including participation in sports activities, summer camps, exercise, instruction, and special events. Here is an overview of the city's Community and Resource Centers:

■ **Kenneth Wallace Neighborhood Resource Center**

This center provides a venue for neighborhood and police activities.

■ **Newtown Neighborhood Learning Center**

This facility provides an after school program, an adult nutrition class, a G.E. D. program, adult computer instruction, and a program for teens.

■ **Northampton Community Center**

Here, visitors will find programs and classes for all age groups, ranging from piano lessons to fitness programs, and opportunities that emphasize family unity.

■ **North Phoebus Community Center**

A special feature of this center is the fitness program weight room. Programs include "Get High On Music, Not Drugs", and adult and youth basketball leagues.

■ **Old Hampton Community Center**

This center offers aquatics programs, open swim sessions, outdoor tennis and basketball courts and a computer lab. There is also a gym, arts and craft room, and a game room.

■ **Senior Citizens Center**

This center provides opportunities to meet and enjoy other active seniors; exercise classes; and instruction on a wide range of interests. New programs

have included a fashion workshop; introduction to weight training; a diabetic shoe clinic; a black history trip; and beginner's chess. The center also hosts extended trips and excursions including a trip to Alaska last year, and a day trip in 2008 to a Yankees/Orioles game to say goodbye to the "House That Ruth Built."

■ **Susan E. Jones Community Center**

Available to the residents of Lincoln Park Housing, this center offers programs for youth and teens, including a computer learning center, pre-school classes, a gym and outside basketball courts.

■ **West Hampton Community Center**

This center features a fitness room, air conditioned gym, meeting rooms, and Hampton's first indoor rock climbing wall. The center's Inner Training Performance Group in 2008 presented an original play about bullying, designed to create greater awareness of how hurtful such actions can be.

■ **Y.H. Thomas Community Center**

This center provides an after school program and a meal in the Kids Cafe to residents of the Old North Hampton Neighborhood. The Y. H. Thomas Athletic Association offers a variety of sports-related activities. Civic meetings and family engagements are welcome.



AQUATICS PROGRAMS PROMOTE FITNESS

It's never too late to swim.

That's why the Old Hampton Community Center pool offers a variety of water fitness classes, as well as learn-to-swim classes for all ages.

In these training sessions, participants are given tasks that help them become more comfortable in and around the water, including breath control and floating. As they become more comfortable, they learn a variety of new skills, eventually being introduced to the breast stroke and side stroke, learning how to tread water, and diving from a standing position.

At the Masters Swim Club, for those 18 and over, participants stay fit with challenging workouts with guidance from a team of experts. Meanwhile, the Water Walkers program combines two of the best exercises people can do: aquatics aerobics, and walking.

The Parks and Recreation Department Aquatics Program also works closely with the community pools throughout the city for its swimming summer camp offerings.

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT

NEW PROJECTS FOR THE PUBLIC'S BENEFIT

To meet the public's continued needs for leisure services, the Parks and Recreation Department strategically plans for the construction of new facilities while also upgrading existing structures and parklands. Here is a list of such projects:

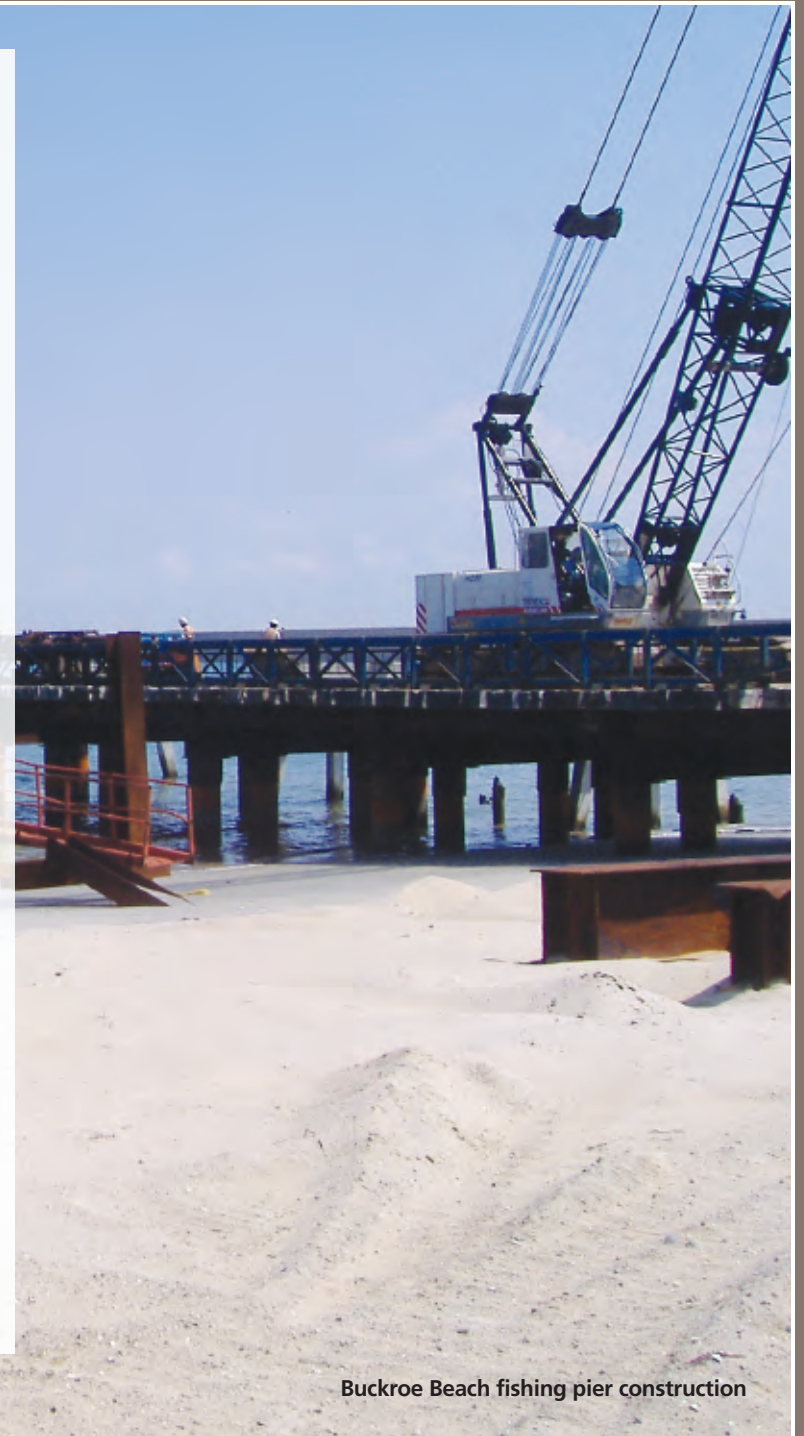
NEW FACILITIES.

- Ridgway Park became the site for the newest "bark park" in Hampton, replacing the Buckroe Beach bark park. There are also plans for a new playground, walkways, and picnic area.
- The new River Street Park features a picnic area; a small pier adjacent to the Hampton River; a kayak launch area; and concrete pillars, each describing significant historical Hampton events.
- The recently constructed Newtown Cultural Center is a 3,000-square-foot learning center.
- Grundland Creek Park now has a new graded grass surface, a picnic shelter, and a site for canoes and kayaks.
- The school age programs administrative offices are now located at what had been the Air Power Park museum. Outdoor park displays continue to be available for self-guided tours.
- Gosnold's Hope Park has seen dredging of an existing channel out to Little Back River to provide visiting boaters with better navigation capabilities.
- Buckroe Park has undergone numerous renovations of the stage, pavilion and adjacent areas.

- Improvements have been made to the Hampton Carousel building and related structures.

... AND HERE'S WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON.

- The Old Hampton Community Center is scheduled to be demolished in early 2009 so that a new, state-of-the-art center can be built in its place. Planned opening: summer 2010.
- Two new soccer fields are being added to the existing soccer park on Buckroe Road. They will be available in fall 2008.
- Landscape development of the pair of two-acre parks in the Buckroe Beach area is in the final pre-construction phase. Designed for comfort and beauty, these parks will include gazebos, shaded areas, and a decorative natural environment. Scheduled opening: spring 2009.
- Construction of the Newmarket Creek Trail began this summer. The trail system will begin near the Coliseum, extending to adjacent areas near Pine Chapel Road. This phase is scheduled for completion at the end of 2009. Ultimately, in Phase II, the trail will wend its way along the creek to the Air Power Park area. It will also be a haven for canoe and kayak enthusiasts.
- A new Hampton Teen Center is scheduled to open in early 2009.
- A new 709-foot Buckroe Beach fishing pier is scheduled to open in spring 2009.



Buckroe Beach fishing pier construction

HAMPTON CLEAN CITY COMMISSION

PARTNERSHIPS TO KEEP OUR CITY BEAUTIFUL

The secret to a beautiful city is to inspire people to take great pride in assuring it remains clean and attractive for all to enjoy.

The Hampton Clean City Commission, working collaboratively with the Parks and Recreation Department and other city government and community entities, has been an important force in this effort for 30 years. The Commission is an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc.

One of its most visible projects in recent years has been the Keep Hampton Schools Beautiful program, which received national honors. The program was initiated to improve the curbside appearance of Hampton schools through beautiful landscaping, while involving a host of community partners.

When the program piloted in 2006 with five schools, the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department helped with the development of landscape templates that focused on easy-to-maintain, drought-resistant plant species. The Parks Division, with Hampton Master Gardeners, also oversaw the initial planting and subsequent maintenance efforts.

Other partners included Hampton City Schools, helping to foster the initial idea and providing resources for continued maintenance; the Hampton Neighborhood Commission which offered a grant for a large portion of the project; and the Volunteer Center of the Virginia Peninsula, which recruited volunteers through the United Way Day of Caring.

Meanwhile, the Hampton Clean City Commission led the effort with its ongoing planning support.

One of the results of the program has been increased interest on the part of schools that were not involved in the initial plantings. Their efforts improved their schools' curbside appeal, even with minimal resources. Currently more than one third of Hampton City Schools participate in the Keep Schools Beautiful program.

Other Clean City Commission programs include:

- **Adopt-A-Spot**, which encourages volunteers to clean litter from public areas
- **Yards Are Really Distinctive Showplaces**, which rewards Hampton residents whose landscapes add to the beauty of the city
- **Keep Hampton Green**, which purchases trees and shrubs for public areas
- **Clean Business Awards**, which recognize those businesses that help keep the city clean and beautiful
- **School Pride in Action** which provides teachers with ideas and supplies to develop a caring and responsible attitude towards their neighborhood and city
- **Make Your Own Rain Barrel** which encourages residents to use rain water from 50-gallon cisterns to meet gardening and landscaping needs. This year close to 130 residents took advantage of the new program.





SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM

HELPING OUR YOUTH SUCCEED

It's a challenge that working parents of elementary and middle school children face throughout our country: They want to know that their children's after school programs, while affordable, are meeting critical needs.

With that focus, the city of Hampton has established partnerships with Hampton City Schools, state and federal agencies, and a host of community resources to provide focused after school care.

An important part of this strategy is the city's School Age Program, administered by Parks and Recreation.

The School Age Program is located in each of the city's elementary schools and Syms and Eaton middle schools. This creates an important dynamic for parents who may feel

comfortable knowing that their children's after school care will continue in the same building they've been in during the day. It also strengthens the neighborhood by further positioning the school as a central community point upon which citizens can rely.

Many of the program leaders and aids work as teachers' assistants in the school system during the day, and are often familiar with each child's particular needs. A number of sites have computer learning labs. The School Age Program includes assistance with homework and also engaging children on topics that may be of interest to them. For children needing specific academic help, there can be focused tutorial assistance through the 21st Century Community

Learning Center located at 20 after school sites throughout the city. (Grants for this service are a component of the federal No Child Left Behind program).

Children also enjoy indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, whether it's playing board games, doing arts and crafts, or participating in sports activities.

A key component to the program includes the enrichment opportunities where organizations in the community share their expertise in areas such as African ballet, gardening, mime, music, nutrition, team building, natural resources protection, and a variety of other areas. Through these presentations, the children come away with a

greater knowledge – and often a newfound interest in something they may wish to explore further.

The School Age Program is available during the school year as well as full-day sessions in summer months. Close to 1,800 students participate. Parents may request a conference with the program leader at any time.

Through its IN-SYNC Partnerships program, the city also helps assure that faith based and private sector after school programs thrive, by providing support materials from Hampton City Schools.

As the Parks and Recreation web site notes: "We are continually searching for new ways to help our youth succeed."

SAILING INTO 2010 AND BEYOND

With a founding date of July 9, 1610, the City of Hampton, Virginia is approaching its 400th anniversary.

In recent years, there has been a sustained air of excitement throughout the city in anticipation of this historic milestone, through special events, gatherings, and educational experiences. The goals for this 400th Anniversary Celebration are to encourage economic development and tourism growth in Hampton; to promote a sense of citizen pride; and to honor and recognize Hampton's historical heritage.

The 400th Anniversary Committee, in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department, is overseeing this sustained celebratory tribute to the city's long heritage.

2007 EVENTS INCLUDED:

- **Hunt for Hampton's History:** Residents were encouraged to share Hampton's history through exhibits and personal oral histories.
- **Journey Up The James:** In celebration of America's 400th Anniversary, replicas of the Godspeed, Schooner Virginia, and Captain John Smith's Shallop docked in Hampton for a visitation.
- **Faith and Diversity:** Led by Hampton's Unity Commission and historic St. John's Church, residents of Hampton were provided the unique opportunity to witness both the similarities and differences of the city's faith communities.

- **Landing Day:** The reenactment of the first landing at Strawberry Banks included costumed settlers and Native Americans in traditional clothing.
- **Founder's Day:** In honor of the city's 397th birthday, a majestic American flag was raised at historic Fort Wool high over Hampton Harbor for travelers to proudly view.
- **American Indian Intertribal and Cultural Festival:** This celebration focused on the reuniting of the Virginia tribes.
- **African American Family Reunion:** This included a Black Expo, genealogy workshops, and historical tours of Hampton.

2008 EVENTS INCLUDED:

- **Hunt For Hampton's History, World War II:** Through exhibits, interpreters, and entertainment, participants revisited Hampton's home front and recreations of the overseas front line during World War II.
- **Landing Day:** Hampton's annual commemoration of the first landing was celebrated with keynote speakers and a special performance from Kecoughtan High School's Chamber Choir.
- **Founder's Day:** Hampton's 398th birthday, celebrated a few weeks later due to a rain delay, was fun for all ages. Children's activities, a cupcake celebration, and a sensational fireworks display were the celebration highlights.





Museum display:
Hampton's first hand-operated fire engine, 1884

HAMPTON HISTORY MUSEUM

THE CITY'S PAST COMES ALIVE

Step back in time as an adventurer in uncharted territory tentatively makes first contact with Native Americans known as the Kecoughtan.

Imagine an 18th century merchant seaman's terror when he spots a ship on the horizon displaying the wretched skull and crossbones — the infamous Blackbeard the Pirate!

Picture yourself dressed in 19th century finery, preparing to enjoy the lively social life of a thriving port city.

The Hampton History Museum offers all of these things – and more. Administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, the museum provides visitors the opportunity to explore 400 years of American history, interpreted through the experience of the nation's oldest continuous English speaking settlement.

Through visits, off-site programs, and special events, over 6,000 people experienced the museum in 2007, with even greater numbers expected in 2008.

Exhibits in the museum include a detailed look at the ways Native Americans interacted with their environment, including a recreated Native American lodge; the 17th century coming of the Englishmen and growth of the town as a trading center; the development of a thriving Port Hampton where blacks and whites, free and in servitude, worked beside each other; the horrors of the Civil War; the triumph of reconstruc-

tion; the development of the seafood industry and local resort facilities; and the emergence of Hampton as a leader in the space age.

A lecture series featuring prize-winning historians as well as local residents has provided insights into many aspects of Hampton's history. Future museum exhibits will include a look at the Old Point Comfort hotels. As an extension of the History Museum, boat tours depart the Downtown area twice a day for guided excursions of historic Fort Wool.

Looking ahead, to assure even greater public interaction, museum staff has embarked on a focused public outreach campaign. This has included the development of curriculum and materials for 33 on site K-through-12 school visits in 2008, with emphasis on Virginia's Standards of Learning.

Presentations about Native Americans have also been made to after-school programs throughout the city. Private schools, home school associations, PTA's, churches, and scouting organizations are also learning of the opportunities and unique experiences the museum will provide them.

The city of Hampton has also contracted with noted local historian John V. Quarstein to help chronicle the city's rich history, for the benefit of present and future generations.

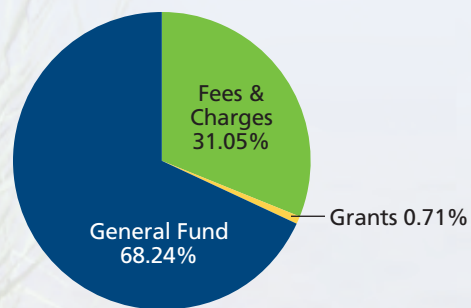


Museum photos courtesy of the Hampton Convention and Visitors Bureau

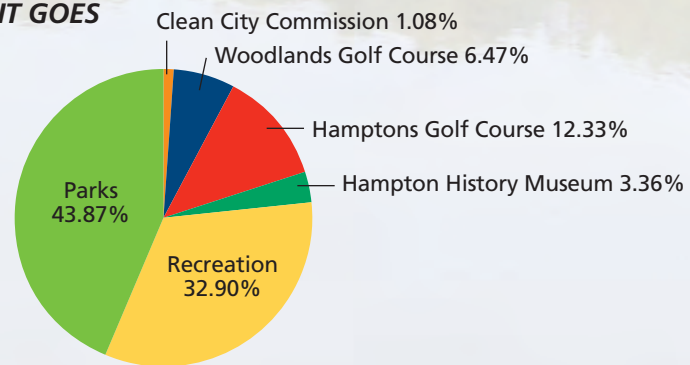
PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING

FY 2007-08 Annual Operating Budget: \$14,395,251

WHERE IT COMES FROM



WHERE IT GOES



Crystal Lake

THANKS TO OUR MANY SPONSORS

The Hampton Parks and Recreation Department offers a very special thank you to our sponsors during the past year:

CASH SPONSORS

Up to \$3,000

AT&T
Busch Gardens
Hampton Coalition For Youth
Hampton Unity Commission
Wynne Ford

Up to \$500

BayPort
Coliseum Central
Business Improvement District
Daily Press
Family Impact, Inc.
Hampton Convention
and Visitors Bureau
Hampton University
Langley Federal Credit Union
Old Point National Bank
Peninsula Networking
Planned Parenthood
Thai American Association

IN-KIND SPONSORS

Barry's For Hair
Baxter's Sports Lounge
Benton Knight
Blue Talon Restaurant
Busch Gardens
Continental Societies Inc.
Daily Press
Danny's Deli
Dean and Don's Produce
Diversions
Fox Company Reenactment Group
Farm Fresh
Jeff's Flowers
Krispy Kreme Donuts
KSO Design
Hampton Bay Days
Hampton Stationery
Inner Circle Enterprises, LLC

Lowe's Home Improvement
Marker 20
Mellen Street Graphics
Miss Hampton II
McDonald Garden Center
Norfolk Tides
Patrick's Hardware
Peninsula Hospital Services, Inc.
Pomoco Auto Group
Portfolio Magazine
Salter's Creek Retreat
She Sells Seashells
Something Different
Sterling's Steak House
Taphouse
Tidewater Hispanic Newspaper
U.S. Food Service
Virginia Air and Space Center



Patrol/rescue truck
sponsored by Pomoco

HAMPTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ADVISORY BOARD

H. R. "Fuzzy" Bukovich
Willie Brown
Troy Elliott
Lillian Gist
Ben Hammond
Ted M. Parr
Jack Pope
Cassandra Rieg

The Hampton Parks and Recreation Department appreciates the assistance of various city boards and commissions in the past year, including:

Athletic Hall of Fame
of the Lower Virginia Peninsula
Friends of
the Hampton Senior Center
Golf Advisory Committee
Hampton Clean City Commission
Hampton History Museum
Association Board
Hampton Military Affairs
Committee
Hampton 2010
Celebration Committee
Mayor's Committee
For People With Disabilities
Parks and Recreation
Advisory Board
Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
Unity Commission
Coalition For Youth
Wetlands Board

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA
PARKS AND RECREATION

22 Lincoln Street • 5th Floor • Hampton, Virginia 23669
757-727-6348 • www.hampton.gov/parks

WE'D LIKE YOUR OPINION

Please take a 1-minute survey and let us know
how well this annual report communicated with you.
Visit www.hampton.gov/parks/survey

This annual report was printed on environmentally friendly recycled paper.

